



Green Vehicles: Commission adopts a Strategy on the future of clean and energy efficient vehicles

Questions & Answers

1) What types of vehicles are covered by the Strategy?

The Communication sets out a strategy for encouraging the development and uptake of clean and energy efficient ("green") heavy- (buses and trucks) and light-duty vehicles (cars and vans) as well as two- and three-wheelers and quadricycles.

2) When will the strategy come into effect?

According to the timetable set out in the Action Plan, the first actions within the strategy will be taken in 2010. Others will follow in the next years.

3) What are the elements of the strategy?

The strategy contains over 40 actions on a wide range of policy fields covering: regulatory framework for reduction of environmental impacts, research and innovation in green technologies, market uptake and consumer information, trade and employment aspects as well as specific actions on electric vehicles such as standardisation, charging and refuelling infrastructure or recycling and transportation of batteries

4) Which types of technologies are foreseen in the strategy on green cars?

This strategy aims to provide a European framework for clean and energy efficient vehicles, including the promotion of clean and energy efficient vehicles based on conventional internal combustion engines and facilitating the deployment of ultra-low-carbon vehicles such as electric and hydrogen vehicles.

5) What is the foreseen contribution of other alternative technologies (hydrogen, biofuels, etc.) to decarbonisation of road transport in the Commission's view?

The Commission does not intend to favour one alternative propulsion technology over the others. It considers that independently of the means to achieve it, the primary objective is the reduction of the environmental impacts of road transport. It means making transport cleaner (reduction of pollutant emissions) and more energy efficient (reduction of CO₂ emissions). For that reason, the Commission intends to create the right framework conditions not only for

electric vehicles (hybrids and pure electric vehicles), but has already taken actions on hydrogen cars and biofuels and lets the market forces decide the winning technology. With this approach, each technology option can contribute to the overall objective of decarbonising road transport.

6) Fully electric vehicles have zero CO₂ emission from the tailpipe. However, the electricity used to power these vehicles can have a significant environmental impact. Are electric vehicles environmentally friendly after all?

The environmental impact of fully electric vehicles depends largely on the production of electricity that is used to charge them. However, studies show that even if the electricity is produced in a carbon intensive manner, the well-to-wheel emission of a full electric car remains lower than the emission of a comparable conventional car. Nevertheless, as set out in the Strategy, care will have to be taken that electric vehicles are charged by using electricity from renewable sources to the extent possible and that they contribute to achieving the 20/20/20 goals.

7) Electric vehicles will be a niche market in the near future and internal combustion engines will continue to dominate. What does the Strategy foresee to reduce the environmental impact of road transport in the short term?

In the short term we will set out measures for internal combustion engines to further reduce pollutant and CO₂ emissions. The EU has already reduced emissions of pollutants such as particulate matter and NO_x by setting ever stricter standards. Euro 6 limits for cars and vans and EURO VI for heavy duty vehicles will apply as of 2014.

The use of alternative fuels such as liquid biofuels and gaseous fuels to burn in combustion engines and substitute petrol or diesel fuel will further increase the potential of reducing CO₂ and pollutant emissions.

8) What will be the benefits of the strategy directly for the European citizens?

This Communication sets out a comprehensive strategy to promote clean and energy efficient transport system in the EU. While pursuing actions in the fields of legislation, research, standardisation and others the strategy will contribute to: improved air quality, especially in cities; reduced dependency on fossil fuels; reduced climate change impacts of road transport; faster development of clean automotive technologies and therefore wider choice for consumers as well as creating new jobs in the automotive industry.